

# *Refugee Registration Process: From Cards to Camp Kílmer Refugee Research Database*

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## Letter of Welcome from President Eisenhower

“We feel a solemn and responsible pride that in your time of need you have come to our shores.”

B-3

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

My friends from Hungary,

In behalf of my fellow Americans, I welcome you to the United States.

The circumstances that have separated you from your homeland and your loved ones fill American hearts with deep emotion and with compassion for what you are enduring. We feel a solemn and responsible pride that in your time of need you have come to our shores.

Through the centuries the Hungarian people have bravely resisted oppression. Their courageous spirit continues today to inspire free people everywhere.

It has been our American heritage to assert our individual freedom and to offer to other peoples, struggling for their own liberty as we once did, such assistance and asylum as we can.

Many of our private citizens and fine volunteer organizations in the United States have joined with our Government agencies to help you in the establishment of your new life in America.

At first our land and our laws may seem strange to you. Some necessary processes through which you join our way of living may cause you minor inconvenience but I ask you to think always of what, beneath these forms, dwells in our American hearts—an earnest desire to clasp your hands, to reach mutual understanding and to become firm friends and neighbors.

Thus, we welcome you to American soil. We realize that you ardently hope for a time when all Hungarians can enjoy the blessings of individual freedom in their Hungarian mother-country. We join in that hope. And we give you this present assurance—if, when that day dawns once more, you should choose to go back to your native homes in Hungary, America will do its best in helping you to return.



DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

# Work in progress

July 10, 2015

40th Annual AHEA Conference, 2015  
Kolozsvár

# Timeline

# Christmas 1956 – in numbers

**Christmas Eve (Monday)**

# „Family album”



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# Why not Ellis Island?

In November 1954 , the last detainee was released, and EI officially closed, but! EI Archives including arrival records through 1957.

The Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation: Passenger Search at <http://libertyellisfoundation.org/passenger>




EI Archive: Passenger Records, original Ship Manifests (passenger lists) and Ship Information often with a picture from 1957 (e.g. General Eltringe)

The screenshot shows the 'PASSENGER SEARCH' results page. The search criteria entered are 'kornel' and 'ROSU'. The results table shows one entry:

NAME	ARRIVED	LAST PLACE OF RESIDENCE / BIRTH PLACE	SHIP NAME	ACTION
Rosu, Kornel	1957	N/A	General Eltringe	  

W 555	REITER	Janos	M	21. 5.20- 36
W 556	RIKKER	Laszlo	M	12. 3.37- 20
W 557	ROSU	Kornel	M	25. 9.30-26
W 558	RONAI	Laszlo	M	22. 5.21-36
W 559	ROZNYIK	Istvan	M	21.1. 21-35
W 560	SANDOR	Joszei	M	19. 3.82-75
W 561	SARKADI	Tibor	M	30. 6.36-21
W 562	SARKADI	Antal	M	6. 9.37-20
W 563	SCHALK	Ferenc	M	2. 4.38-19

\* Please note that manifest images are smaller than the acid-free archival paper they are printed on. They are reproductions printed from microfiche images of the actual historic documents and dimensions can vary considerably. The manifest image on 11" X 17" paper measures approximately 9" X 14".

LINE	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME & MIDDLE	RESIDENCE	ETHNICITY	ACTIONS
1	Molnar	Ferenc			
10	Nagy	Vince			
11	Klancs	Edmond			

# Why Camp Kilmer?



# Camp Kilmer then...



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## **Camp Kilmer now...**

- 540 acres belong to Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey - Livingston Campus since 1964

- Edison Job Corps Center: a national residential education and vocational training program for the economically disadvantaged youth



# Commemoration 2009



The screenshot shows a web browser window with several tabs open: 'Inbox - deak.nora1@gmail...', 'Camp Kilmer cards - Googl...', 'Monguz OPAC', and 'Trans Art Area - International E...'. The address bar shows the URL 'transartarea.com/index.php?option=com\_content&task=view&id=1715'. The page content is framed by a dark red border. At the top left, there is a small video player with the title 'Pivax Players: From' and a play button. To the right of the video player, the text reads: 'The Edison Job Corps Academy and the North American Hungarian Citizens League cordially invite you and your family to'. Below this, the title 'The Commemoration Camp Kilmer' is displayed in a large, red, serif font. Underneath the title, the text reads: 'The former refugee camp for those who fought bravely in the Revolution of 1956.' Below this, the date is listed: 'Date: Saturday, January, 31 2009 at 10:30 am'. Further down, the location is given: 'Place: Edison Job Corps Academy Gymnasium' and '500 Plainfield Avenue, Edison NJ'. At the bottom, the RSVP information is provided: 'RSVP Required: Judit Tormasi at 732-609-2950 or info@nbmpt.org'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several application icons, and the system clock displaying '9:41 2015.06.23.'.

THE COMMEMORATION CAMP KILMER

Pivax Players: From

The Edison Job Corps Academy and the North American Hungarian Citizens League cordially invite you and your family to

*The Commemoration Camp Kilmer*

*The former refugee camp for those who fought bravely in the Revolution of 1956.*

Date: Saturday, January, 31 2009 at 10:30 am

Place: Edison Job Corps Academy Gymnasium

500 Plainfield Avenue, Edison NJ

RSVP Required: Judit Tormasi at 732-609-2950 or info@nbmpt.org

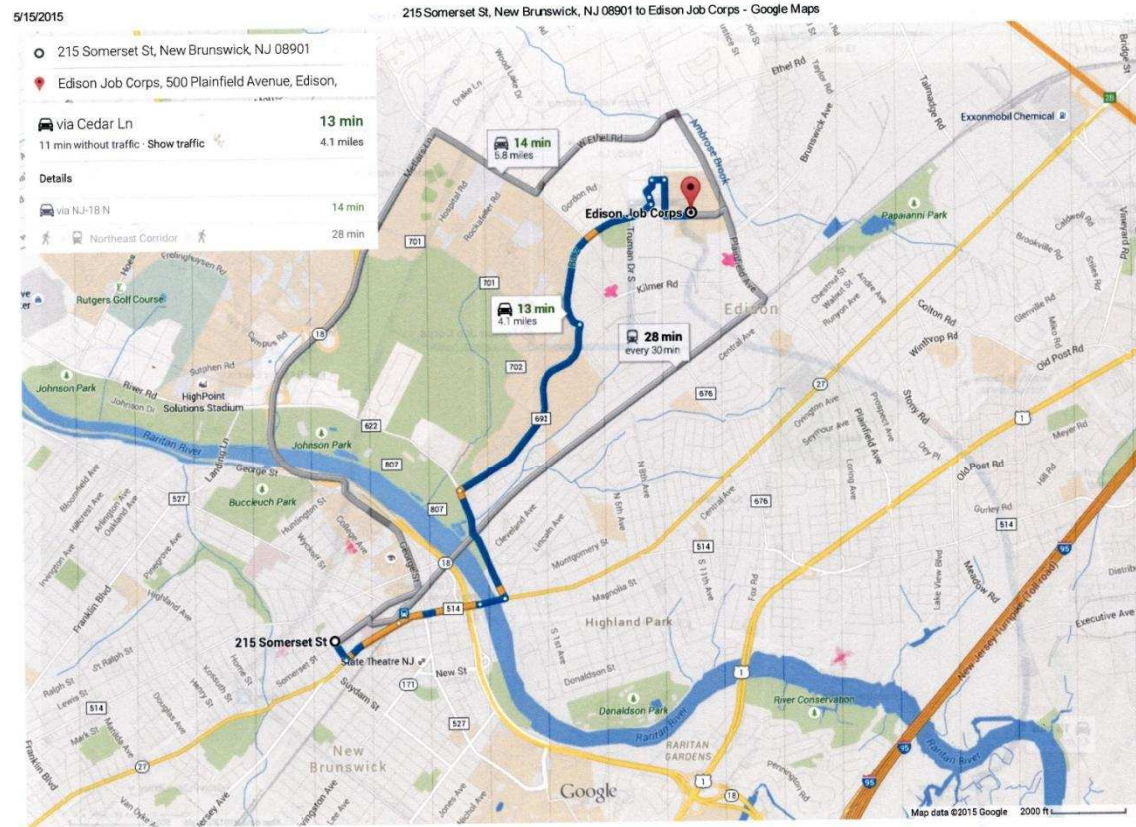


The Edison Job Corps Academy and the North American Hungarian Citizens League invited former refugees and guests to Camp Kilmer for the unveiling of a plaque on 31 January 2009

([http://www.gimagine.com/gimagine/new\\_brunswick/2009/2009-01-31-Commemoration at Camp Kilmer/default.htm](http://www.gimagine.com/gimagine/new_brunswick/2009/2009-01-31-Commemoration%20at%20Camp%20Kilmer/default.htm))



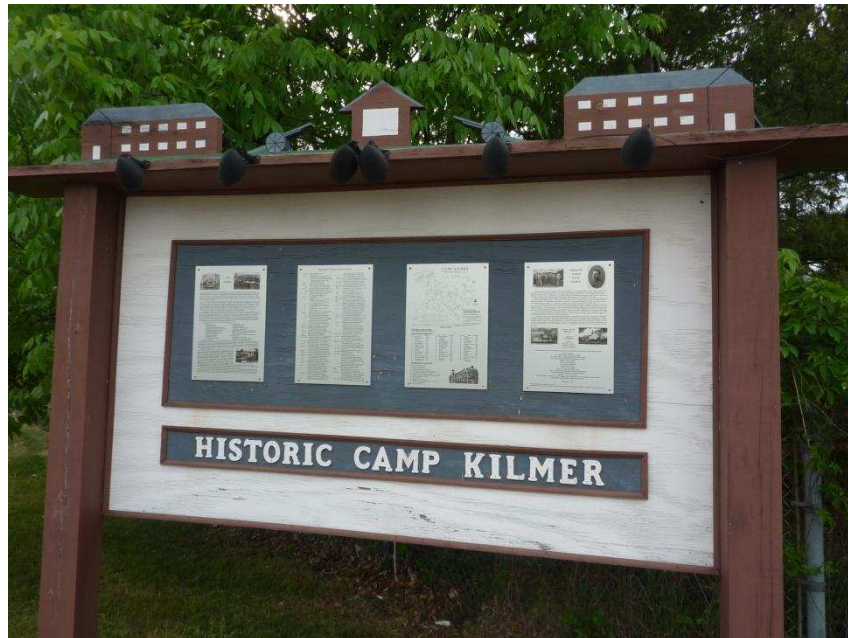
# Signs on Google Map



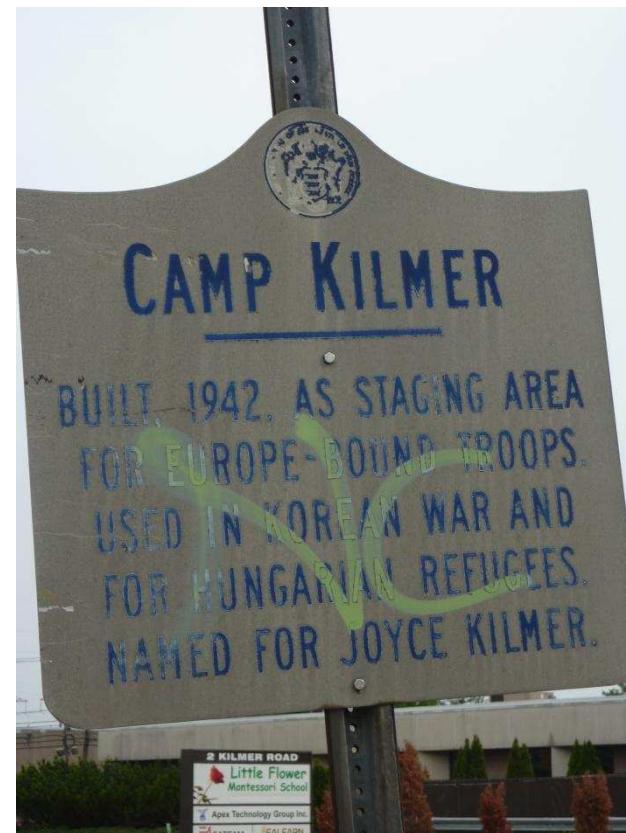
<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/215+Somerset+St,+New+Brunswick,+NJ+08901/Edison+Job+Corps,+500+Plainfield+Avenue,+Edison,+NJ+08817/@40.510458,-74.4282513,14z/data=!4m13!4m12!1m5!1m11!1s...> 1/1

# 2 (road)signs

**HISTORIC CAMP KILMER**



**CAMP KILMER**





FRANCES JOYCE KILMER. New Jersey's best-known poet was born in the upstairs bedroom of 17 Codwise Avenue on December 6, 1886. His father was a founder of the Johnson & Johnson corporation. Joyce attended Rutgers Prep from 1894 until 1904, and during that time he met his future wife, Aline Murray. Kilmer went on to graduate from Columbia University in 1908. When the World War erupted in 1916, Joyce Kilmer enlisted and in 1918 was killed on duty in France.

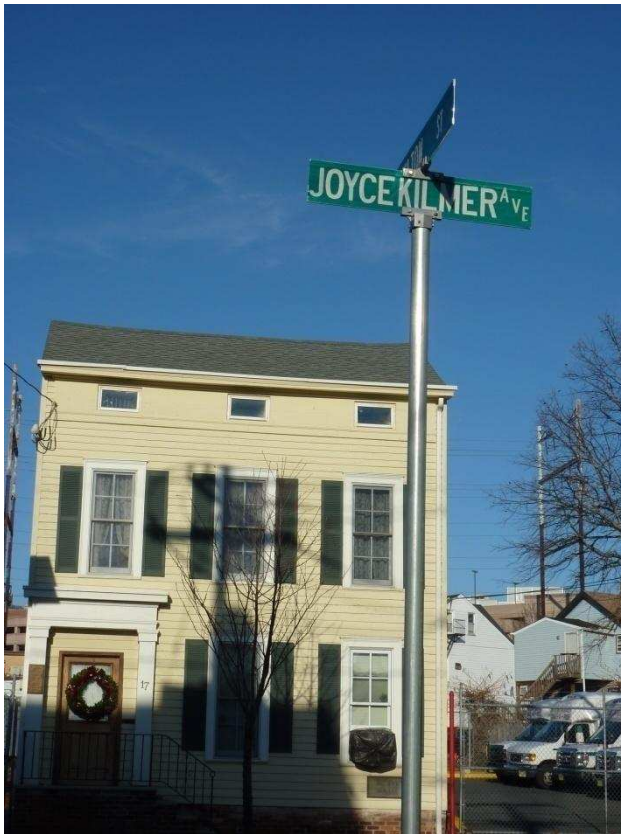


**Joyce Kilmer**



# Remembering JK

**JOYCE KILMER AVENUE**



**KILMER HOUSE**



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# Processing of the refugees

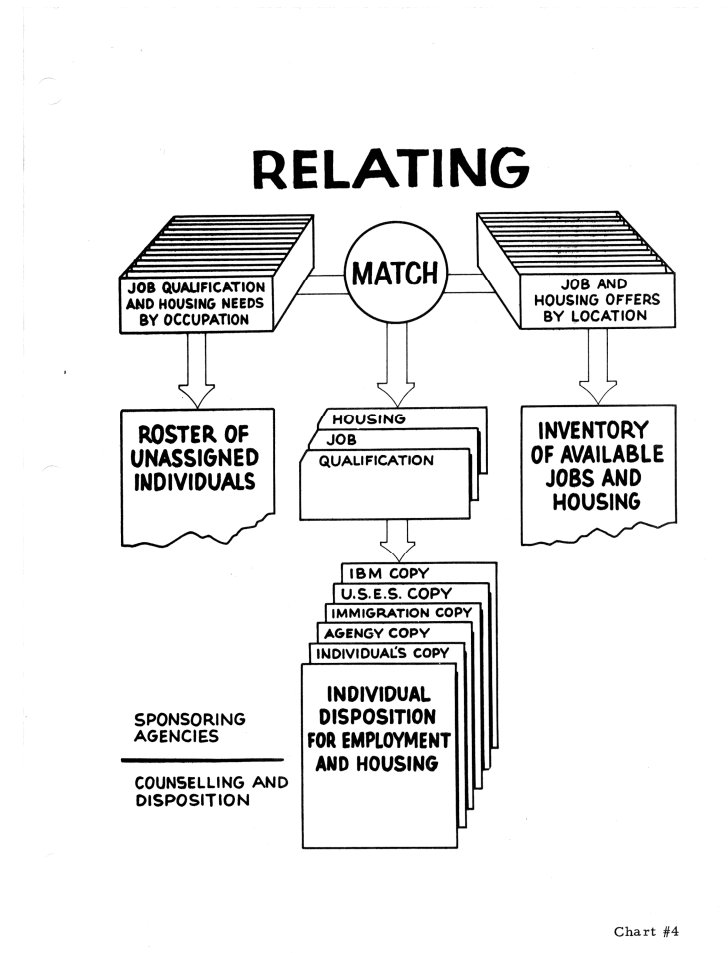
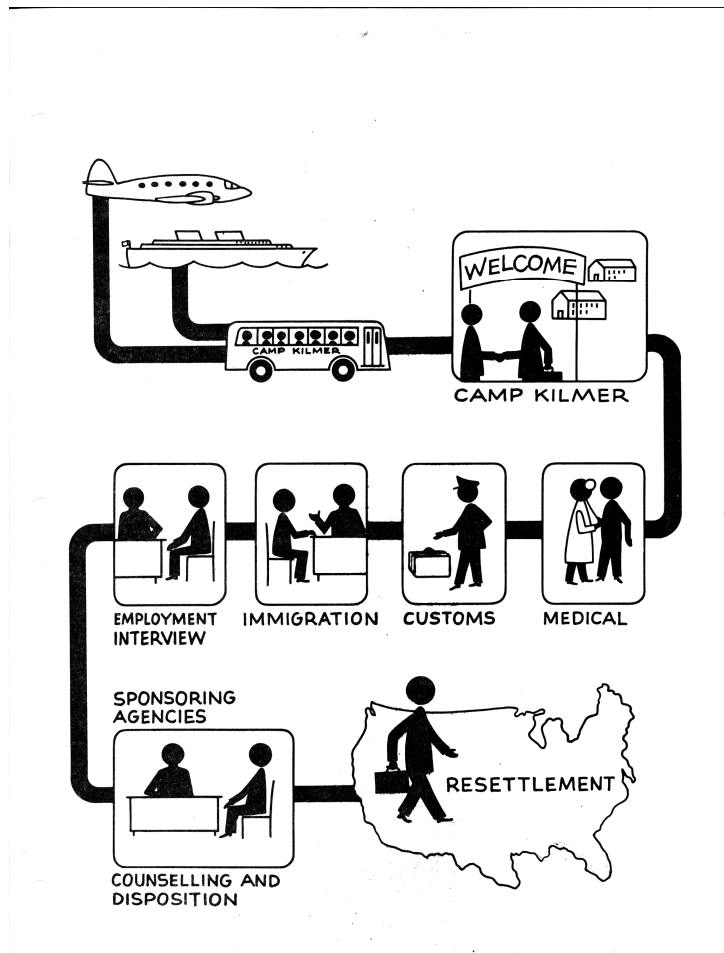
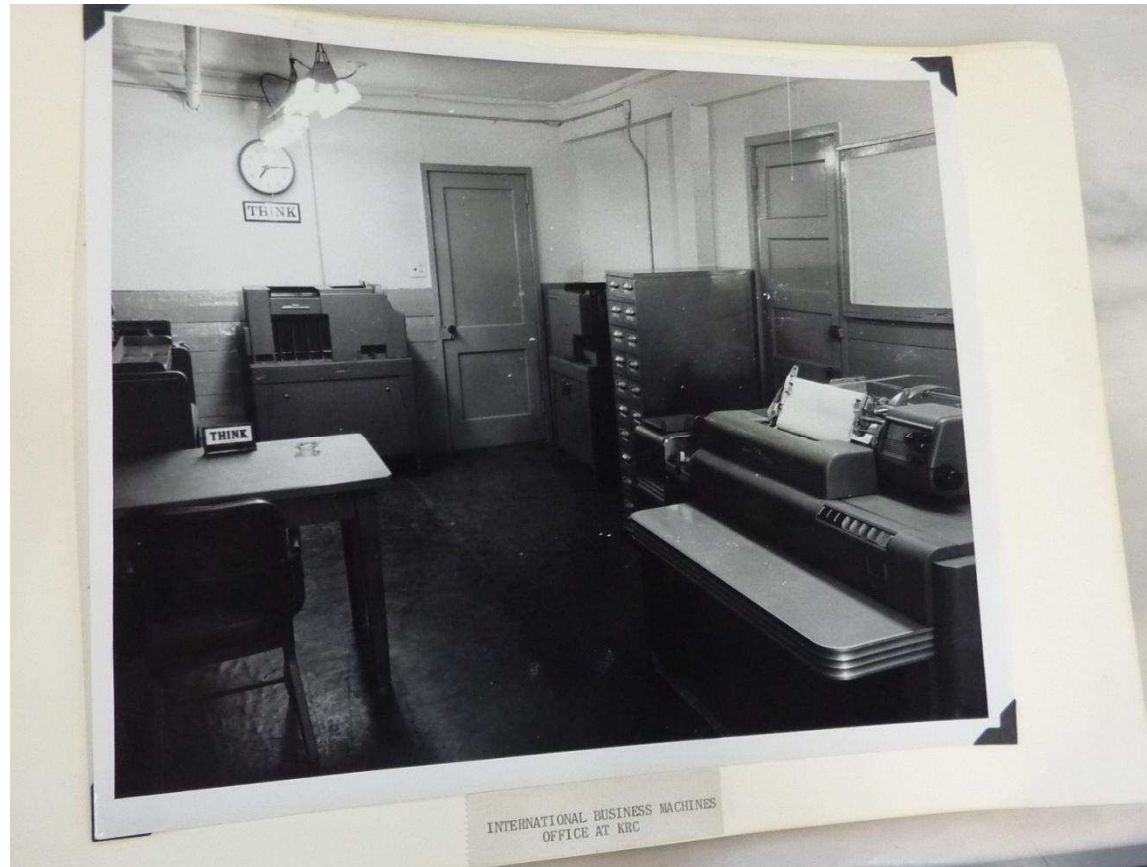


Chart #4



## **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES OFFICE AT KRC**

Source: National Archives Record Administration at College Park, MD

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# Operation Mercy – The Big Picture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM4rC86-uS8>

Hungarian freedom fighters dramatically filmed on Army's "THE BIG PICTURE," "Operation Mercy" -- From the bloody streets of Budapest, through the border escape routes into Austria and finally to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, "Operation Mercy" as shot and documented on THE BIG PICTURE becomes a most compelling story. In this film presentation, the "human side" of the Army is identified in the contributions of the American soldier assigned to "Operation Mercy." Not so long ago thousands of Hungarian Freedom Fighters and their families were helped toward sanctuary in the United States. For them the gates of Camp Kilmer represented the end to a way of life they had found oppressive and the beginning of a new life of hope and opportunity. The action moves from the early street fighting in Budapest through the last days in October when the thunderous roar of Russian tanks was stilled and the smoke cleared over the ruined city to a ship moving out of Bremerhaven toward a pier in Brooklyn. Here all Americans -- along with the United States Army -- did not turn their backs, but pitched in to do a job for the valiant men and women of Hungary. Depicted in "Operation Mercy" are the many volunteer workers of the American Red Cross and other agencies working together at Camp Kilmer and at the American Embassy in Munich.

# History of the registration cards, ...

Primary source: the cards



# Samples: simple

ACS, LASZLO M 20 11 37

NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE

LOCKSMITH, 12 13 56

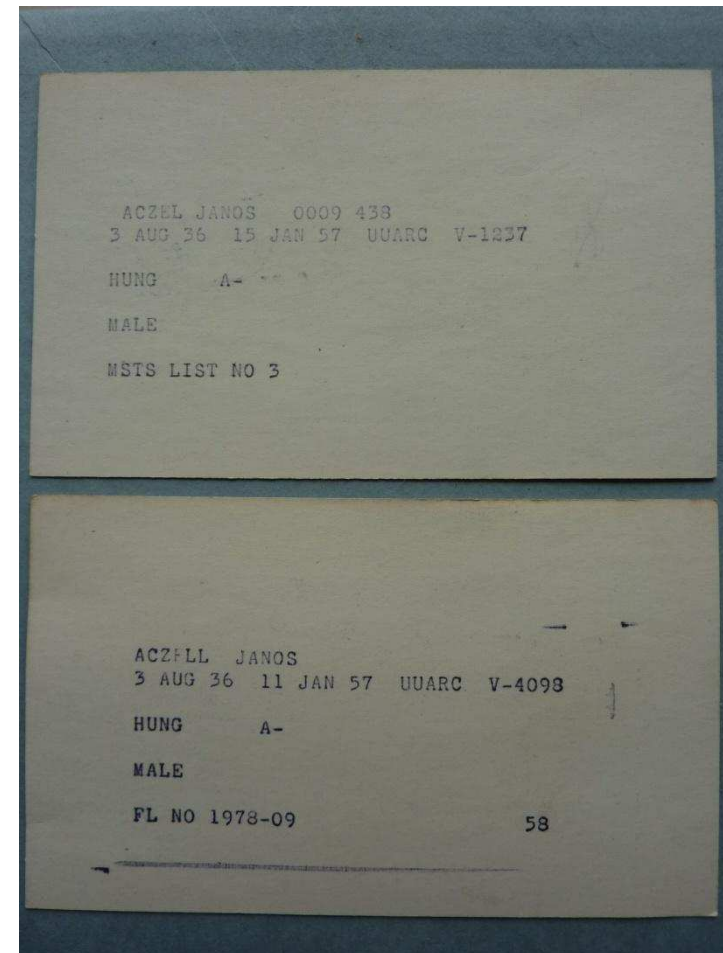
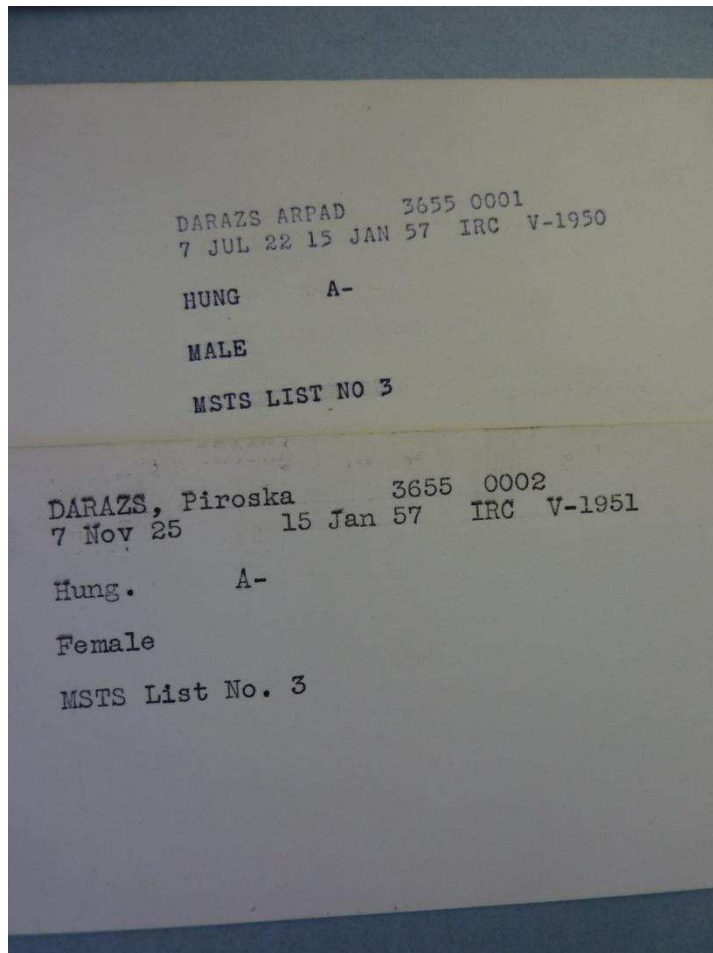
BILLISICH, Antal M 1935 Journalist

YEAR OF BIRTH

SPONSORING AGENCY

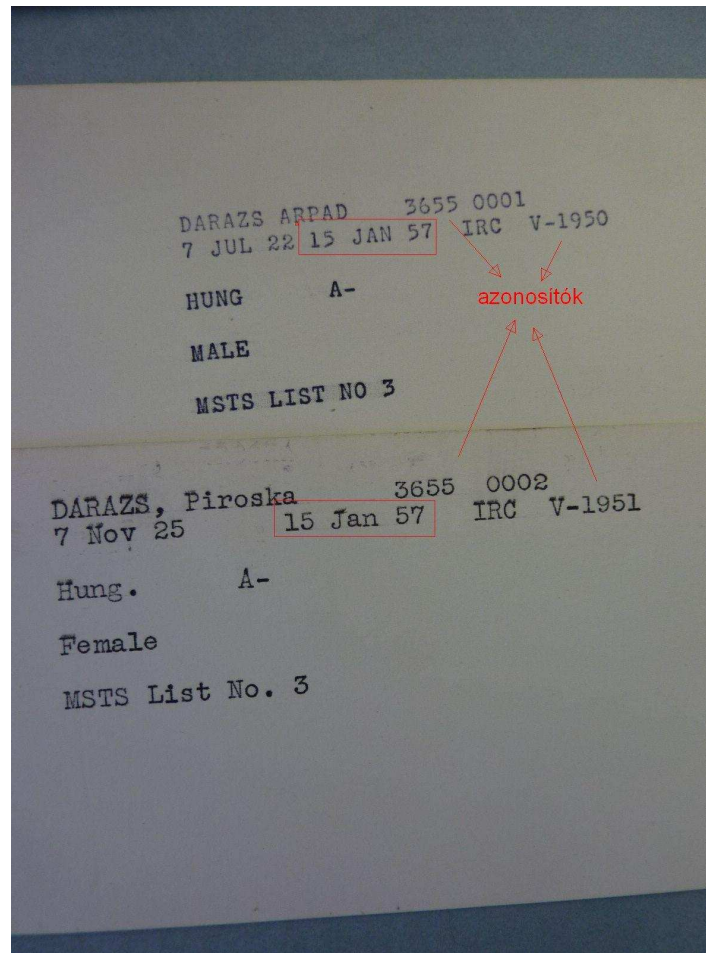
IRC Arrived Dec 4, 1956

# Samples: complete





# Samples: single



# Samples: multiple

Handwritten notes on lined paper:

Darnai Benjamin M 1933  
" Magdolna F 1936

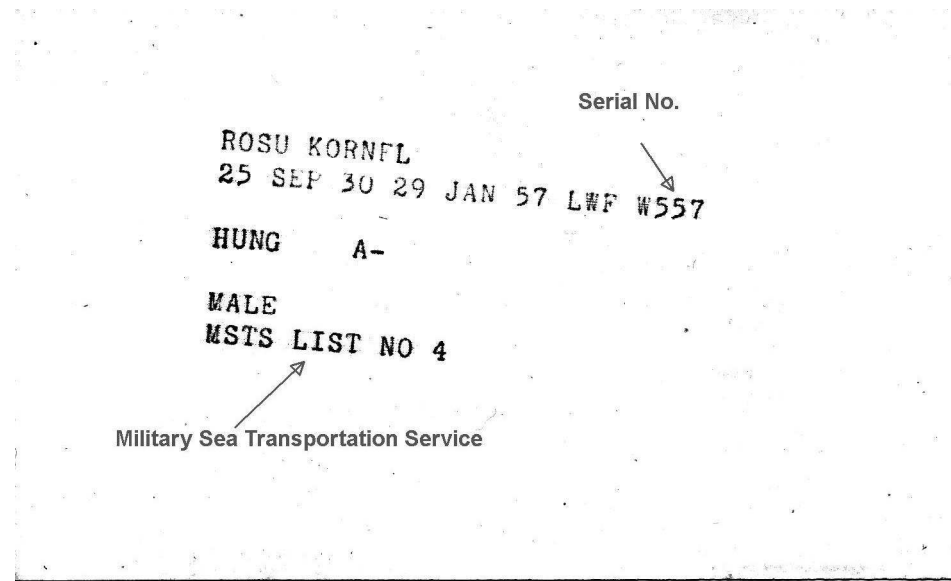
NCWC Arrived December 17. 1956

DAROC JENO 1908 MALE  
DAROC MALVINO 1916 FEMALE

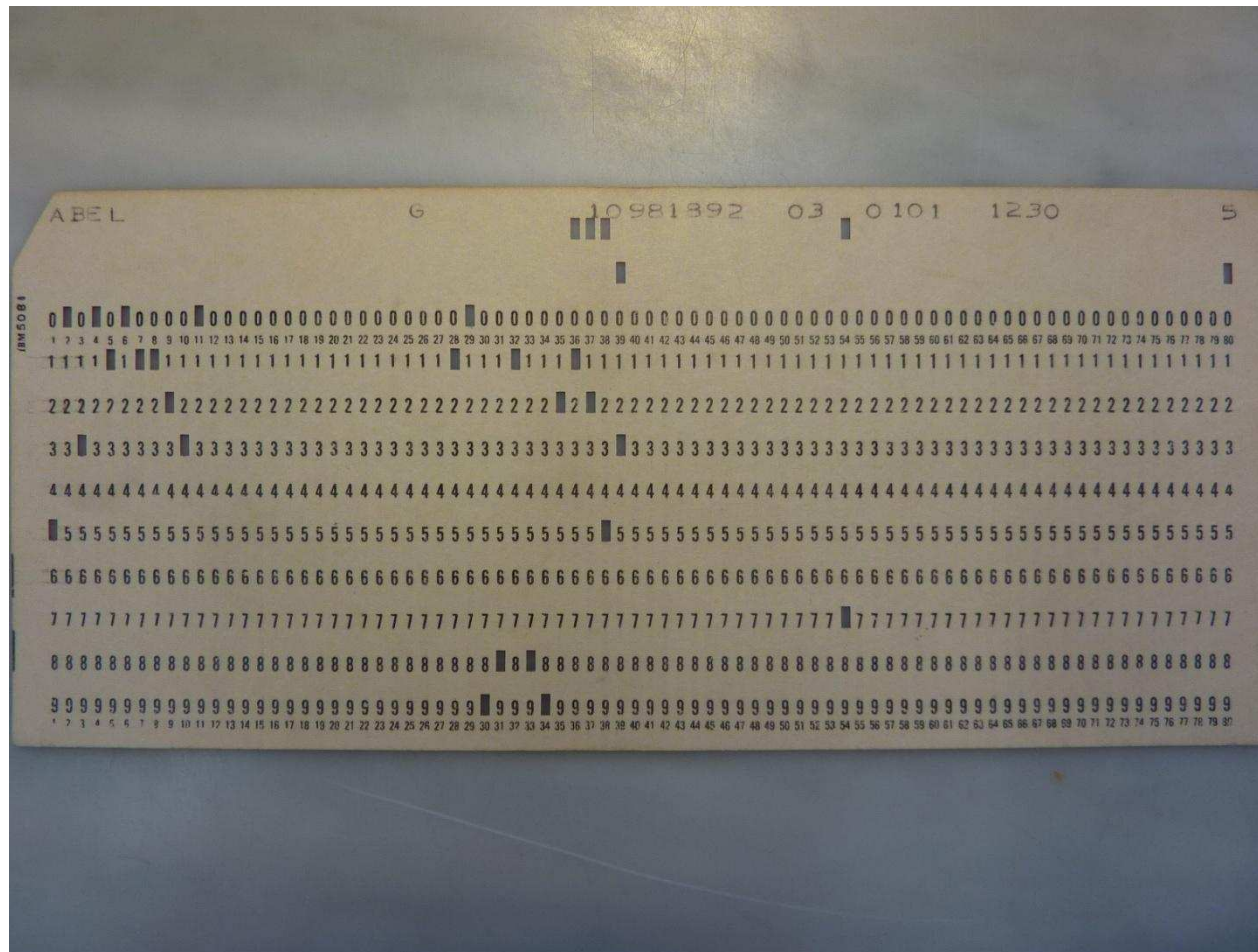
UHIAS ARRIVED DEC. 17

Red handwritten note with arrows pointing to the Darnai entries: SAME FAMILY NAME

# Sample – from Ship Manifest



# Sample – IBM punch card



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# Sponsoring Agencies

CODE:

HIAS - Hebrew Immigration Aid Society  
NCWC - National Catholic Welfare Council  
CWS - Church World Service  
IRS - Lutheran Refugee Service  
IRC - International Rescue Committee  
TF - Tolstoy Foundation  
IF - Independent Fathers (Jesuits)  
Ind - Independent  
UUARC - United Ukrainian-American  
Relief Committee



# Volunteers – churches

Camp Kilmer



Camp Kilmer — Monument of the Hungarian Refugees 1956. Rev. Lukacs Máriaföldi, Mrs. Peter Kara, Mrs. James Kovács, Rev. Vazul Végvári, and Gen. Walton.

# Volunteers – relief agencies



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# Volunteers - individuals

## KORMONDYs

KORMONDY, Esther Miss  
134 Louis St.  
New Brunswick, N. J.

AMERICAN HUNGARIAN FEDERATION

KORMONDY, Joseph Mr. & Mrs.  
193 Albany St.  
New Brunswick, N. J.

AMERICAN HUNGARIAN FEDERATION

## OLCHVARY Judit

OLCHVARY, Judith Miss  
150 Easton Avenue  
New Brunswick, N. J.

AMERICAN HUNGARIAN FEDERATION



# Spreadsheet

Camp Kilmer cards ☆																
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help All changes saved in Drive																
fx Name (on card)/(Kártyán szereplő) Név																
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
1	Name (on card)/(Kártyán szereplő) Név	Original name/Eredeti név	Gender/	Date of birth/Születési idő	Date of arrival/Érkezés és ideje	Date of death/Halálozási dátum	Age at arrival/Kor érkezéskor	Age in 2014/Kor 2014-ben	Occupation/Foglalk	Ship or Flight Manifest/Hajó vagy Járatszám	Listán belüli sorszám?	Sponsoring Agency Code/Segélyszervezet kódja	Sponsoring Agency/Segélyszervezet	SA melletti szám (?)	Név melletti szám (?)	Lar
2	ABEL GUSTAV	Ábel Gusztáv	male	13-May-1924	29-Dec-1956		32	90		FL 1802-28	9	NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	2847 0001	HU
3	ABEL JOZSEF	Ábel József	male	2-Feb-1935	30-Dec-1956		21	79		MSTS List No 45		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	S 4286	-	HU
4	ABEL KLARA	Ábel Klára	female	13-Dec-1934	29-Dec-1956		22	80		FL 1802-28	10	NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	2847 0002	HU
5	ABEL RUDOLF	Ábel Rudolf	male	19-Feb-1921	2-Mar-1957		36	93		FL 12807	34	IRC	International Rescue Committe	-	3185	HU
6	ABLONCZY GYÖRGY	Ablonczy György	male	6-Oct-1939	29-Jan-1957		18	75		MSTS List No 4		WCC	World Council of Churches	-	S 9953	HU
7	ABODI BELA	Abodi Béla	male	11-Sep-1928	13-Apr-1957		29	86		FL 1792-12	5	WCC	World Council of Churches	-	-	HU
8	ABODI BELA	Abodi Béla	male	25-Nov-1951	13-Apr-1957		6	63		FL 1792-12	7	WCC	World Council of Churches	-	-	HU
9	ABODI ELISABET	Abodi Erzsébet	female	7-Mar-1943	13-Apr-1957		14	71		FL 1792-12	6	WCC	World Council of Churches	-	-	HU
10	ABONYI ERZSEBET	Abonyi Erzsébet	female	9-Sep-1941	14-Jan-1957		16	73		FL 1986-13	55	NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	S-9787	-	HU
11	ABONYI ERZSEBET	Abonyi Erzsébet	female	17-Oct-1934	2-Mar-1957		23	80		FL 12816	48	WCC	World Council of Churches	-	12599	HU
12	ABONYI ERZSEBET	Abonyi Erzsébet	female	30-Sep-1919	14-Jan-1957		38	95		FL 1986-13	54	NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	S-9786	-	HU
13	ABONYI PAL	Abonyi Pál	male	13-Dec-1942	14-Jan-1957		15	72		FL 1986-13	56	NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	S-9788	-	HU
14	ABONYI PAL	Abonyi Pál	male	14-Sep-1911	14-Jan-1957		46	103		FL 1986-13	53	NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	S-9785	-	HU
15	ABONYI SANDOR	Abonyi Sándor	male	16-Oct-1938	15-Jan-1957		19	76		MSTS List No 3		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	S 9167	-	HU
16	Abraham Alajos	Ábrahám Alajos	male	21-Jun-1902	16-Dec-1956		54	112		-		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	-	
17	Abraham Izabella	Ábrahám Izabella	female	11-Sep-1911	16-Dec-1956		45	103		-		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	-	
18	Abraham Alajos	Ábrahám Alajos	male	20-Aug-1934	16-Dec-1956		22	80		-		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	-	
19	Abraham, Andras	Ábrahám András	male	19-Jul-1937	11-Dec-1956		19	77	Student	-		IRC	International Rescue Committe	-	-	
20	ABRAHAM ANNA	Ábrahám Anna	female	14-Apr-1934	14-Feb-1957		23	80		MSTS List No 5		WCC	World Council of Churches	-	S-11398	HU
21	ABRAHAM CHRISTOF	Ábrahám Kristóf	male	1-Dec-1927	15-Jan-1957		30	87		MSTS List No 3		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	V-1900	364L 0001	HU
22	ABRAHAM GEZA	Ábrahám Géza	male	26-Mar-1932	14-Dec-1956		24	82		-		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	-	
23	ABRAHAM, JOZSEF	Ábrahám József	male	1920	12-Dec-1956		36	94		-		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	-	
24	ABRAHAM, EVA	Ábrahám Éva	female	1931	12-Dec-1956		25	83		-		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	-	
25	ABRAHAM, PAL	Ábrahám Pál	male	1953	12-Dec-1956		3	61		-		NCWC	National Catholic Welfare Coun	-	-	

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# Challenges

# Examples of occupations

**Original/translation?**

# Routine Digitization Project

# Presentation in RUcore

# Other useful resources

**JDC: American Jewish Joint  
Distribution Committee**

# Oral History projects

**CURPH: Columbia University's  
Refugee Project on Hungary**

# MKULTRA, Subproject 69



# Memory Project

## (in the making on vimeo, facebook)

### Share your story with the Memory Project!

As Hungarian Americans, we have the goal of passing on our heritage to the next generation. What better way than to share our stories - stories of immigration or revolution, of building a family and creating a legacy, of finding ways to honor both our Hungarian and American roots.

We are working to document the story of Hungarian immigrants to the US - focusing on refugees from WWII and the 1956 Revolution. By creating a uniform approach to recording our community history, we will provide access to remarkable personal recollections online and ensure that our stories are never forgotten.

#### See living history!

[www.vimeo.com/channels/memoryproject](http://www.vimeo.com/channels/memoryproject)  
[www.facebook.com/hungarianamericanmemoryproject](http://www.facebook.com/hungarianamericanmemoryproject)  
[mail@56films.com](mailto:mail@56films.com)

#### Who are we?

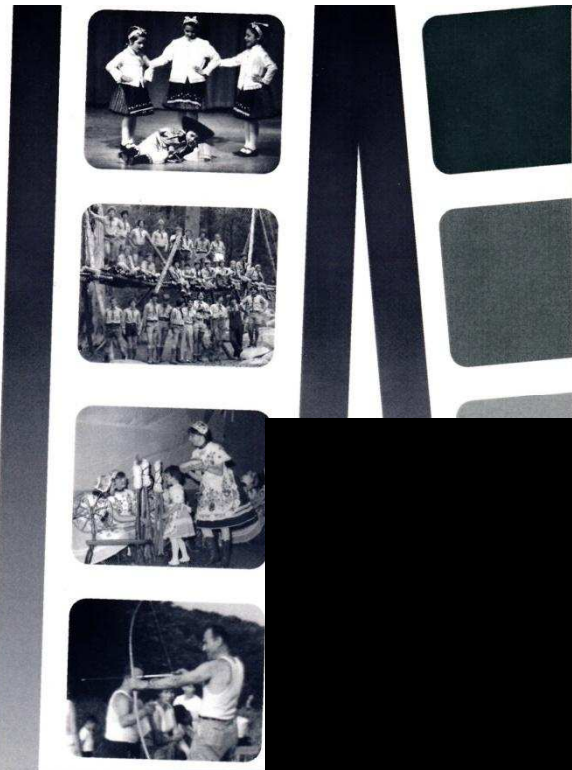
Reka Pigniczky, award-winning documentary filmmaker, journalist, daughter of '56ers  
Andrea Lauer Rice, author, journalist, award-winning game designer and producer, daughter of '56ers

Special thanks to The Hungary Initiatives Foundation



**Emlékek:**  
Amerikai-Magyar  
Vizuális Emlékgyűjtemény

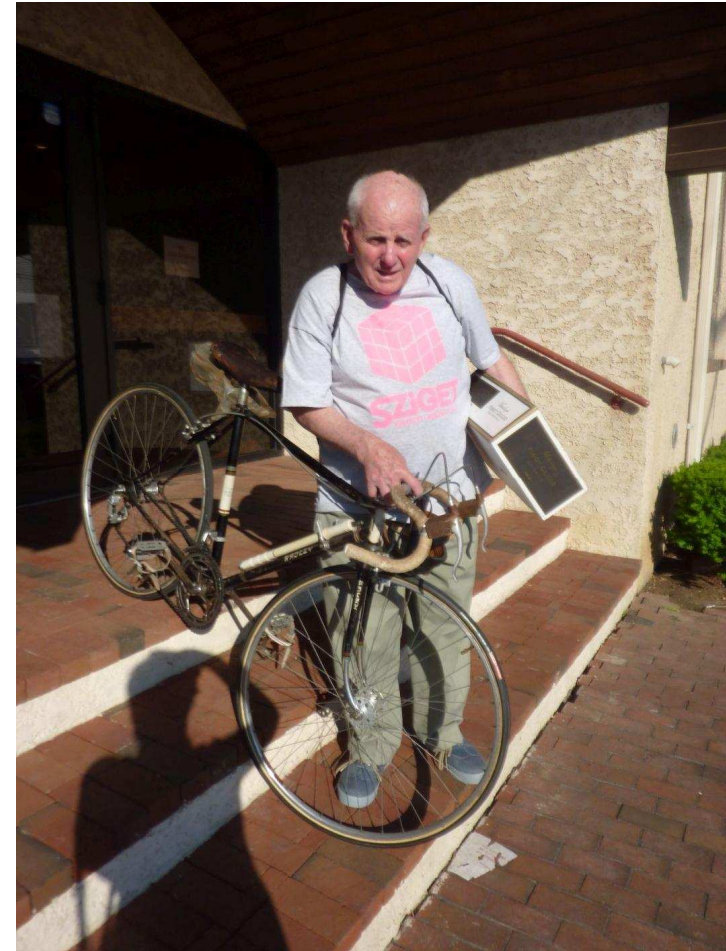
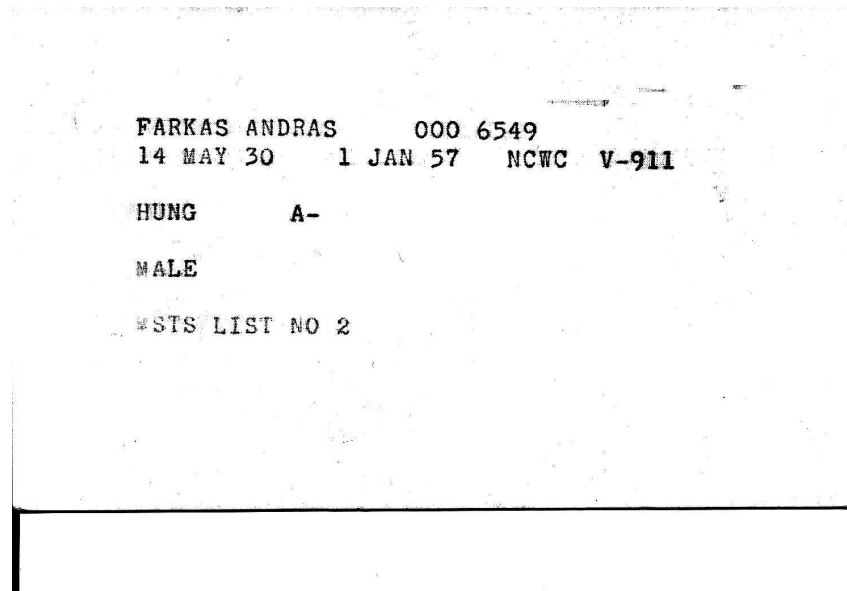
**Memory Project:**  
Hungarian American  
Visual History Archive



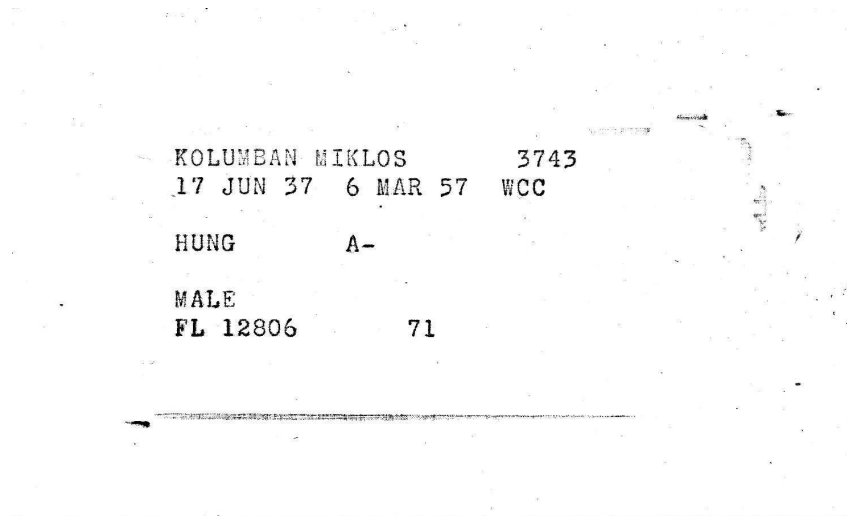
# Individual cases: AHEA-members remembered

Basa, Peter	M 35	Med. Student	V Nagy Karoly	M	24.5.34	Teacher
			WCC Arrived December 17, 1956			
Nov. 22, 1956 NCWC Dec. 9, 1956						
BIRO BELA 0008 815 26 AUG 37 15 JAN 57 WCC S-6151			VERMES GABOR 16 SEP 33 22 FEB 57 HIAS			
HUNG A-			HUNG A-			
MALE			MALE			
MSTS LIST NO 3			FL 1792-21 9			

# Individual cases: the bicycle-racer, photographer, collector

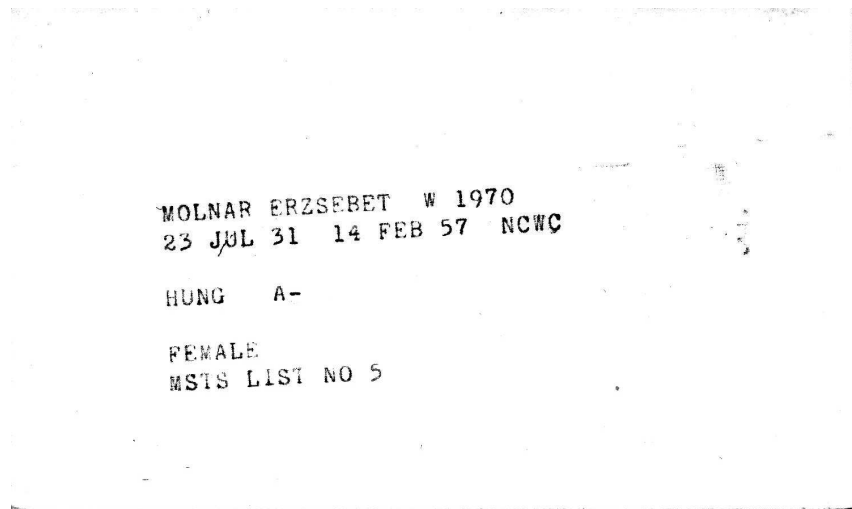


# Individual cases: the poet





# Individual cases: the librarian, Professor Emerita, researcher on Franz Kafka and Ferenc Molnár, photographer, PEN-member



July 10, 2015

40th Annual AHEA Conference, 2015  
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# Individual cases: the parishioner(s)

PAVLICS, JOSEF	30. 8'40
NCWC	
Arrived December 13, 1956	

# Individual cases: the architect

Papp	Laszlo	M	1929	Architect
"	Judith	F	1931	Chem. Eng.

IRC Arrived December 7, 1956



# Individual cases: the marine and cab driver

## Several Pusztai arrived

Pusztai, Janos	M 1910
" Susanna	F 1913
" Tibor	M 1940
" Judith	F 1944
" Peter	M 1946
" Ilona	F 1939
" Erika	F 1952
NCWC	Dec, 13m 1956

PUSZTAI, LASZLO	M	4
NCWC	DEC. 15, 1956	

US Navy, also mentioned in E. Szentkirályi' latest book (p. 75)

obits.cleveland.com/obituaries/cleveland/obituary.aspx?pid=164651147

cleveland.com | THE PLAIN DEALER Obituaries

### LASZLO O. PUSZTAI

Obituary | Condolences

**RESOURCES**

- PUSZTAI Pages (11) See More >
- PUSZTAI Mentions See More >



PUSZTAI LASZLO O. PUSZTAI, age 60, of Brunswick, passed away peacefully on Thursday, May 2, 2013 with his family by his side. He was born Sept. 24, 1952 in Hungary. Laszlo proudly served his country in the U.S. Navy and was a long time cab driver for City Cab Company in Cleveland. Laszlo will be greatly missed by his loving mother Pearl; dear brother-in-law James Deal; nephews Vince and Nikolas Deal; treasured aunts Susan (Gary) Waselich, Judy Shranko-Nagy, Erika Pusztai, Sofia Pusztai and Diane Pusztai as well as many cherished cousins. He was preceded in death by his sister Cynthia Sandor-Deal; grandparents Janosh and Zsuzsanna Pusztai; and uncles John, Tibor and Peter Pusztai. Private services have taken place. Online condolences may be left at [www.walkefuneralhome.com](http://www.walkefuneralhome.com).

Published in The Plain Dealer on May 5, 2013

SHARE    

### REMEMBER

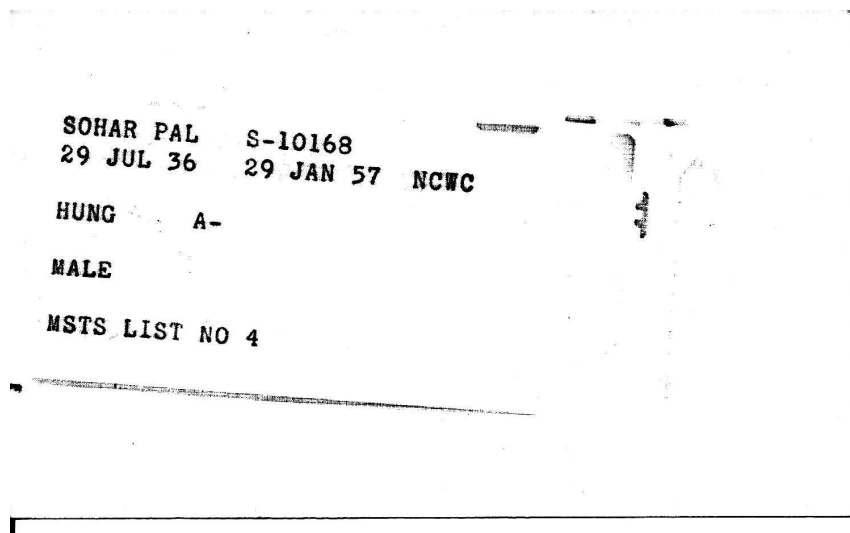
THE GUEST BOOK IS EXPIRED

*"Steve and Charlotte Banhidy send their deepest sympathy to the entire family. Our*

Please restore the Guest Book to share in the life story for LASZLO O. PUSZTAI



# Individual cases: the chemist, poet and translator



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# Acknowledgements

*Thank you for your  
attention!*